

## NE LEA HILL NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING NOTES - JANUARY 7, 2009



On January 7, 2009 the City of Auburn Mayor and City staff met with residents of the NE Lea Hill neighborhood at Auburn Mountain View High School, 28900 124th Ave SE, to discuss neighborhood concerns.

**Staff in Attendance:** MAYOR PETE LEWIS, COMMUNITY SERVICES MANAGER DUANNA RICHARDS, COMMUNITY SERVICES PROJECT ASSISTANT KIRSTEN REYNOLDS, ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF LARRY MILLER, COMMUNITY PROGRAMS OFFICER ANDY GOULD, AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNER JOE WELSH

**Community Members in Attendance:** TARA BISHOP-ERNST, WILLIAM & ANITA LYONS, SUNNY GILL, MARILYN HOOPER, PATTY COCHEAN, CRAIG & DEBI TURRENTINE, DIETRICH & ROSEMARIE RIEMOR, PATTI CUNNINGHAM AND CATHY HUNTER

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Mayor Pete Lewis welcomed everyone, thanked them for attending and asked City staff to introduce themselves. The Mayor then indicated the primary purpose of the meeting was for the City to listen to the residents' concerns, respond to questions they could answer immediately and identify items for follow up. The City takes notes of the meeting, which are then sent out to the attendees.

Mayor Lewis facilitated the meeting and discussed the following topics:

- ***Mayor's Update*** -- residents were encouraged to sign up for the Mayor's Update, an e-newsletter Mayor Lewis sends out every Friday about what's taken place in the City during the week, upcoming events, etc. He also uses the listserv to send out alerts about road closures, emergencies, etc. as a way to keep the community informed. Since this is a listserv, if you decide you don't want to continue receiving it you can unsubscribe at any time.

### **General Questions/Comments**

- ***What's the current status on the Lea Hill Fire Station?***

Currently the station is fully staffed. Mayor Lewis talked about the formation and growth of the Valley Regional Fire Authority (VRFA). A year before Auburn's annexation of Lea Hill and West Hill, the Cities of Algona and Pacific joined Auburn in the formation of the VRFA to better serve the surrounding areas effectively. The three Cities still have control over VRFA; each partnering City keeps ownership of real property. VRFA is governed by one Mayor and two Councilmembers from the partnering Cities.

***UPDATED RESPONSE from VRFA Administrator, Eric Robertson: The station is staffed with a three or four person engine company capable of fire suppression and emergency medical responses – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. This is an increase from previous staffing models used by the District prior to January 1, 2008.***

- ***Why did the 2007 house fire in the NE Lea Hill neighborhood get out of control?***  
It was unknown at the time; staff will inquire about what happened in this situation and report back to the residents. Residents reported there were issues with how the fire department handled the situation.

***UPDATED RESPONSE from VRFA Administrator, Eric Robertson: The VRFA took over***

**responsibility for this area when it became part of the City on January 1, 2008. They cannot speak for the District, who provided service to that area in 2007.**

- **Now that Lea Hill has been annexed what's happening with the Well Districts?**  
All septic systems and wells will continue to be maintained by King County. The City of Auburn is not allowed to make requirements for either of these systems.
- **What can be done about High School youth littering in the neighborhoods?**  
Staff will pass along the information to the Auburn School District that kids from the High School are causing problems in the neighborhood such as speeding and littering.

### **Public Safety Related Questions/Comments**

- **If you have a problem or see anything suspicious call 9-1-1!**  
Residents were encouraged to report everything to 9-1-1. We, the citizens of Auburn, own the 9-1-1 system. You should call 9-1-1 whenever you have an emergency, feel something suspicious is going on, need to speak with an officer or file a report. (An online reporting system is also available at [http://www.auburnwa.gov/police/online\\_reporting.asp](http://www.auburnwa.gov/police/online_reporting.asp) if you would prefer to file your report that way.) **PLEASE NOTE:** If calling from a cell phone you need to ask for an "Auburn Call Receiver."

Auburn shares ownership of the 9-1-1 system with other South King County cities and the calls go to a dispatch center so residents shouldn't worry about tying up the phone line when making non-emergency calls. When you call 9-1-1 it will be answered by a "Call Receiver." The Call Receiver will determine whether or not your call is an emergency to be handled right away or to have an officer make contact with you to file a non-emergency report. They will ask questions which are specifically designed to obtain information so that the proper response can be made for your call.

If you want to know what the officer finds out be sure to let the Call Receiver know you DO want to be contacted by the officer when they've completed their investigation.

In addition to emergency issues, residents should also call 9-1-1 for non-emergency issues such as street lights out, stop lights out, missing stop signs, fireworks, loose dogs, sewer backups, water leaks, etc. An alternative is to report them via the City website. The link is under Online Services at the top of the page and is called Online Citizen Report (half way down): [http://www.auburnwa.gov/Business/Contracting\\_Consulting/Online\\_Citizen\\_Report.asp](http://www.auburnwa.gov/Business/Contracting_Consulting/Online_Citizen_Report.asp)

- **Have there been problems with mail theft in other areas of Auburn?**  
Mayor Lewis explained that mail theft has been happening all over the Puget Sound region. Having a secure mailbox will help to keep theft down and so will establishing and maintaining a neighborhood Block Watch. Having a Block Watch will help to prevent thieves from coming and going unnoticed in your neighborhood.
- **Is it possible to get more street lights in the area?**  
There are several dark corners off 124<sup>th</sup> Ave; residents explained it's hard to see and can be extremely dangerous at night. The City will talk to Puget Power about providing service to the area.
- **Can more PhotoSafe cameras be installed in the Lea Hill area?**  
Residents noticed cameras are only located around the highway corridors and would like to see more installed around the general Lea Hill area. Mayor Lewis explained eventually there will be more cameras installed for the general area; however, there are laws that must be

followed. State law indicates these PhotoSafe cameras are only allowed at warranted railway intersections, school zones and traffic intersections.

### **Traffic and Streets Related Questions/Comments**

- The City Traffic Engineers will review all requests and give a response and recommendation back to the neighborhood. However, before any action is taken, the City will bring all recommendations back for residents to review to ensure all residents have been heard and options explored.

- ***Speeding is a high concern for the neighborhood!***

The residents' primary concerns were with throughway traffic volume and speeding throughout the community. Speeding has been an on-going issue for the last three to four years. The most speeding was reported to be happening on 284<sup>th</sup> Street, typically between 118<sup>th</sup> and 124<sup>th</sup> from 2:45pm – 6pm. Police acknowledged the problem and reported giving out 125 citations between 112<sup>th</sup> and 284<sup>th</sup> in the 2008 calendar year. The City has posted more speed limit signs on 248<sup>th</sup> which has helped but hasn't completely solved the problem.

It is evident to the City there is a speeding problem; stealth units will be put out to document the problems before and after any traffic calming improvements are made to determine their effectiveness.

Residents reported school buses are one of the biggest culprits for speeding. Residents have called the bus barn to complain about the speeding and have received very unfriendly service from their staff. Additionally, the busses are very loud; they start running the engines at 2:45 am. Staff will follow up with the Auburn School District regarding this issue.

***UPDATED RESPONSE from Assistant Police Chief, Larry Miller: The School District Transportation Division has been notified of the continuous speeding complaints regarding their bus drivers.***

- ***Why wasn't 284<sup>th</sup> striped after being repaved between 112<sup>th</sup> and 124<sup>th</sup>?***

Residents explained there was striping before the road section was repaved and expressed they'd like to see it striped again. Residents would also like to have a speed platform/bump installed on 284<sup>th</sup> to prevent speeding. Mayor Lewis explained the differences between the types of humps and bumps the City uses for traffic calming. The City prefers to do striping and other less expensive traffic calming measures first, which usually is done in August or September when the weather allows paint to dry.

- ***Can 118<sup>th</sup> be punched through to 304<sup>th</sup> to ease traffic?***

Residents explained the road between 118<sup>th</sup> to 304<sup>th</sup> was open to help alleviate traffic congestion during development. After development was finished the road was closed off. Residents suggested if it was reopened it may help alleviate some traffic from 304<sup>th</sup> and 118<sup>th</sup> that both feed in from 284<sup>th</sup>. Staff explained this road has never been completed as a public street.

- ***Can roundabouts be installed on 284<sup>th</sup> (between 124<sup>th</sup> and 112<sup>th</sup>) like the one on 316<sup>th</sup> (between 112<sup>th</sup> and 116<sup>th</sup>)?***

Roundabouts must be installed at intersections that have ample room; staff responded this is not a feasible option at the requested location.

- ***Can bike lanes be painted on 112<sup>th</sup> and/or 284<sup>th</sup>?***

There are safety issues for bike riders; can bike lanes be painted on the current road? Staff replied there is not enough room on 112<sup>th</sup> or 284<sup>th</sup> to implement this request.

- ***Can limited visibility signage be placed at the crest of the hill on 284<sup>th</sup>?***

After 284<sup>th</sup> was repaved the pavement was raised creating a slight height difference residents cannot see over the hill to pull out safely; constant speeding traffic doesn't help either. Staff agreed that "limited visibility" signage could be installed at this location.

### **Development Related Questions/Comments**

- ***Why are residents getting charged twice for water after the annexation to Auburn?***

Residents explained they are getting billed twice for surface water, once from the City of Auburn and once from King County. During pre-annexation meetings the City held with King County representatives it was agreed that once the annexation took hold King County's fees would be dropped. After the annexation was completed King County explained there had been a previously passed bond that was anticipated to last for the next seven years.

- ***Development is causing problems!***

Because of all the development happening around the "Kent Island" area 284<sup>th</sup> Street has become a major east to west byway; it has had increased traffic congestion. Mayor Lewis explained that currently this area belongs to Kent and the developer has agreed to build approximately 300 homes. Auburn is working with Kent and the developer to make the area's infrastructure up to Auburn's standards. Once the development is complete it will be annexed into the City of Auburn.

- ***Does the City require developers to pay for road improvements?***

The City of Auburn does require both traffic impact fees and/or road improvements for adjacent frontages of developed property. There are specific outlined requirements Auburn gives the developer during the planning stages of their new development; these fees vary on a case by case basis.

- ***Can the roadside ditches on 118<sup>th</sup> be maintained to better standards?***

Residents expressed serious water drainage problems from development happening in the area. The roadside ditches off 118<sup>th</sup> are always full of water, even during the summer time. The City is currently maintaining these ditches on a regular basis and there's not much more that can be done.

- ***Can porous pavement be used for better drainage?***

The City is looking into using porous material for internal neighborhoods; because this material doesn't hold up on frequently traveled roads, it is less effective and extremely expensive.

### **Summary of Solutions Discussed/Action Items**

1. Staff to check the status on the Lea Hill Fire Station. ***UPDATE RESPONSE*** from VRFA Administrator, Eric Robertson: *The station is staffed with a three or four person engine company capable of fire suppression and emergency medical responses – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. This is an increase from previous staffing models used by the District prior to January 1, 2008.*

2. Staff to research house fire in 2007. **UPDATE RESPONSE** from VRFA Administrator, Eric Robertson: *The VRFA took over responsibility for this area when it became part of the City on January 1, 2008. I cannot speak for the District, who provided service to that area in 2007.*
3. Staff to pass along information to the Auburn School District regarding High School youth speeding and littering throughout the neighborhood.
4. Staff will follow up with the Auburn School District regarding the bus barn noise complaint and speeding issues. **UPDATED RESPONSE** from Assistant Police Chief, Larry Miller: *The School District Transportation Division has been notified of the continuous speeding complaints regarding their bus drivers.*
5. Staff to work with Puget Power about getting service installed throughout the area; specifically at the bottom of the hill on 284<sup>th</sup>.
6. Major speeding issues were reported between 118<sup>th</sup> and 124<sup>th</sup> (on 284<sup>th</sup>). Stealth units will be put out to determine the problems before and after any traffic calming improvements are made to determine their effectiveness.
7. The City will have striping done on 284<sup>th</sup> between 112<sup>th</sup> and 124<sup>th</sup> when the weather allows for paint to dry; this should be in August or September.
8. Request to have “limited visibility” signage installed at the top of hill on 284<sup>th</sup>.
9. Staff will investigate and determine if the street sweeper is currently maintaining 124<sup>th</sup> Street.

#### **Community Services Team Contact Information:**

- Duanna Richards, Community Services Manager, 253-931-3099 or [drichards@auburnwa.gov](mailto:drichards@auburnwa.gov)
- Kirsten Reynolds, Community Services Project Assistant, 253-876-1964, or [kreynolds@auburnwa.gov](mailto:kreynolds@auburnwa.gov)